PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC SITES SUMMARY SHEET

P.G. County Survey # 62-6	Date c. 1765-85
Building Name Montpelier	
Location Rte. 197 at Montpelier Drive	, Laurel, Md. 20710
Open to Public x yes no rest:	

Montpelier is a five-part brick Georgian mansion with central block of two-and-one-half stories, and hyphens and wings of one-and-one-half stories. The bricks are laid in Flemish bond. The central block has five bays, three of which are within a projecting pavilion topped by a pediment with bull's-eye window. Two balancing interior chimneys rise from the steep pitched hipped roof of the central block. The semi-octagonal design of the wings has led architects to the conclusion that they were designed by William Buckland, architect of the similar Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis, although this is unconfirmed.

Montpelier was built in the second half of the eighteenth century by members of the wealthy Snowden family, prominent in the early iron industry of this country. Construction was probably begun by Thomas Snowden, who died in 1770, and completed by his son, Major Thomas Snowden. Two firebacks are inscribed with TAS 1783 (for Thomas and Ann Snowden) and this date may indicate the completion of the mansion.

Montpelier remained in the hands of Snowden descendants until the late nineteenth century. Subsequent owners included Emmanuel Havenith, Minister from Belgium, who added the kitchen and servants' quarters just before World War I; and Breckenridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt.

Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Maryland	
COUNTY:	
Prince George's	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

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Montpelier is located approximately ten miles south of the city of Laurel, Maryland, on the west side of Maryland Route 197 about four miles north of its interchange with the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

The exact date of construction is unknown, but it is known that the land was held intact until 1790.

Montpelier is a Maryland five-part Georgian country house consisting of a large main block (two stories plus attic), hyphens and two rectangular wings (added c. 1770) each with a three-sided bay on the garden (east) gable-end. The central block is comprised of five bays on the west, the three center bays of which are part of a slightly projecting pavilion topped by a pediment with a large bulls-eye window in the center. This pediment gable projects from an otherwise hipped roof of steep pitch with a trace of bell-cast in its slope. Two tall chimney stacks rise from halfway up the side hips of the slate roof. The brick work is Flemish bond except for an all-header belt course; there is a two-brick, molded water table above the high base. The joints have a quarter-inch wide mortar joint, also used on the Hammond-Harwood House, Annapolis, Maryland. All the windows have splayed brick lintels of gauged brick. The entrance doorways on the front (southeast) and rear (northwest) are almost identical having fluted pilasters, metope, and are topped with an open pediment. The east doorway has a fanlight with Chinese-Gothic tracery; there are shaped stone steps. A modillion and dentil cornice adorn the main block. Each of the hyphens (one-and-a-half-story) has two smaller windows and a doorway; the wings have one dormer on the east side. A caretaker's house (twentieth century) has been added on to the west, but follows the scale and style of the west side of the wings. The interior is decorated with mid-Georgian carvings, with fluted pilasters, dentil cornices, molded chair rails, and fireplace mantels in the manner of Abraham Swan. The west drawing room is fully panelled and includes a secret panel leading to a staircase alongside the chimney.

Montpelier is one of the Georgian houses in the Palladian country-house-tradition in America. Although added (probably by William Buckland) about 1770, the wings may have been intended originally to make the house a five-part Maryland house equivalent to the Roman country-house type after the manner of Robert Morris' Rural Architecture (1750). Aside from the overall horizontal arrangement, the central block illustrates the Georgian passion for symmetry and proportion and demonstrates the artistic dependence of this style on English prototypes, and ultimately, on the Renaissance.

[see continuation sheet]

Form 10-300a (July 1969) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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Montpelier

#7. DESCRIPTION continued

Tradition alleges that the slips came from Wales (the native home of the first Richard Snowden), were replanted at Birmingham, Anne Arundel County, the Maryland home of the same Snowden, and subsequently replanted at Montpelier, the home of Snowden's grandson. Another tradition purports that the slips may have come from the home of Ann Ridgely, the wife of Major Thomas Snowden (1751-1803). Some credence is given the story that George Washington took some slips of boxwood from Montpelier and used them in his own gardens at Mount Vernon.

At the end of the boxwood allee stands a rare extant hexagonal eighteenth-century summerhouse which is similar to the garden house at the Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island (illustrated in Carl Bridenbaugh, Peter Harrison, 1949), and to the summerhouse at the Usher-Royall Palace, Medford, Massachusetts (destroyed, but illustrated in John Mead Howells, Lost Examples of Colonial Architecture, 1931, Plate 169), possibly by Samuel McIntire. Few eighteenth-century garden structures remain, which is unfortunate in that new expressions of taste often appear first in the garden. The similarity of this summerhouse to the dome of the Annapolis State House is striking and suggests an oriental-Chinese source, popularized at the time by English books such as William Halfpenny's New Designs for Chinese Temples, Triumphal Arches, Gardens, Seats, and Palings (1752) and by the furniture maker Thomas Chippendale (c. 1750). "Chinese" structures in Europe such as Sir William Chambers' Pagoda at Kew Gardens and the Pagodenberg at Sans Souci made Chinese gazebos fasionable.

Prior to the plastering of the garden gazebo a number of years ago, the walls were covered with writing, poetry, and the names of people who had visited there for a span of over a hundred years.

Each side of the gazebo has an arched window with Gothic (or Chinese Chippendale) sash; the doorway has a similar form, enhanced by a keystone in the arch. There is a small dentil cornice below the lower roof and a turned finial on the top of the upper roof. The horizontal siding is applied in shiplap method.

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Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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(Number ell entries)

Montpelier

#4. OWNER OF PROPERTY continued

(joint ownership)
Breckenridge Long Willcox (Mrs. Arnold Willcox)
3804 Bradely Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland code: 19

#6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS continued

Maryland Register of historic sites and landmarks

Maryland Historical Trust
P. O. Box 1704
Annapolis, Maryland code: 19

#7. DESCRIPTION continued

Montpelier illustrates the then height of fashion in the projecting pavilion with pediment (immediate predecessor of the full-height portico), the doorway with gothic fanlight tracery (a very early instance of an arched doorway in America), the five-part plan, and in the gardens, especially the gazebo. Hugh Morrison calls Montpelier, along with Tulip Hill and Whitehall, among the finest and most interesting mansions of the mid-eighteenth century.

The house is set within a formal Georgian garden containing boxwood, box trees, and a garden gazebo; a plan of the gardens, as well as of the house itself, are found in Great Georgian Houses of America.

The garden, directly in front of the house, is composed of three terraces. The formal plan for the boxwood the cross was once a walkway from the front door down to the lowest terrace. The boxwood maze beyond the south wing is believed to be over two-hundred years old. The boxwood, in some cases, is over nine feet high.

No one is certain of the origin of the boxwood.

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General George Washington, his wife Martha Washington, their nephew Robert Lewis, and Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams the second President, and the mother of John Quincy Adams the sixth President, were among the visitors to Montpelier.

George Washington, traveling from Mt. Vernon to the Constitutional Convention, spent the night of May 9, 1787 at the mansion. The President remembered in his diary "...feeling very severely a violent headache and a sick stomach, I went to bed early." However, Washington's impression of Montpelier was favorable for he stopped there again on September 21, 1787, on his return from the Finitedelphia Convention to Virginia.

On May 18, 1789, Martha Washington, accompanied by her nephew Robert Lewis, stayed at Montpelier while en route to the Innauguration of President Washington in New York City.

Thomas Snowden (1722-1770) built the central block of the house, probably after 1740. He had inherited the 10,000 acre, seventeenth-century landholding from his father Richard Snowden, the c. 1670 owner of the Patuxent Ironworks. Richard Snowden had, in turn, inherited the same landholdings from his Quaker, Roundhead, father Richard Snowden, a Welshman who immigrated to the colonies before 1669. The restoration of Charles the Second in 1666 may have influenced his decision to emigrate.

Major Snowden (1751-1803), who served Maryland during the American Revolution, married Ann Ridgley of Anne Arundel County. Their wedding was so elaborate that Major Snowden was refused entry into the Quaker meeting. The Friends allowed him to return only after he had liberated one-hundred of his slaves.

After Major Snowden died in 1803, Montpelier went to his son Nicholas Snowden (1786-1831) although in his will the

[see continuation sheet]

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Montpelier

#8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

Major did not refer to Montpelier by name. The next owner was Julianna Maria Snowden, a daughter of Nicholas Snowden, who married a Baltimore doctor, Theodore Jenkins, in 1835. After the death of her husband in 1866, Mrs. Jenkins managed the property and upon her death willed Montpelier to her unmarried daughters.

From the 1890's Montpelier passed through a succession of owners including Miss Eleanor Fitzgibbon who, in 1918, made alterations to the decorative interior woodwork. From 1928 to 1958 The Honorable Breckinridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State under Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, lived at Montpelier.

The twentieth-century additions of a kitchen and servant's quarters, extended from the south wing, and a seven-stall garage were built by His Excellency, the Minister from Belgium, Mr. Emmanuel Havenith.

#9. REFERENCES continued

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Form 10-300o (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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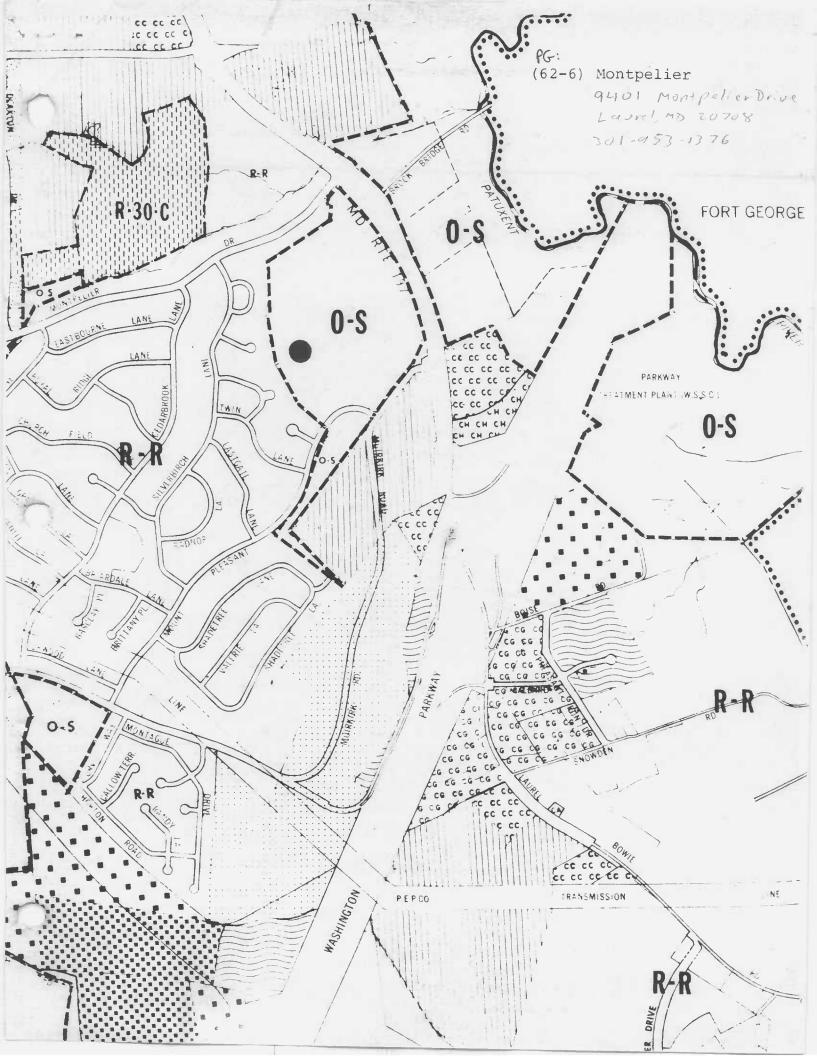
Montpelier

#9 REFERENCES continued

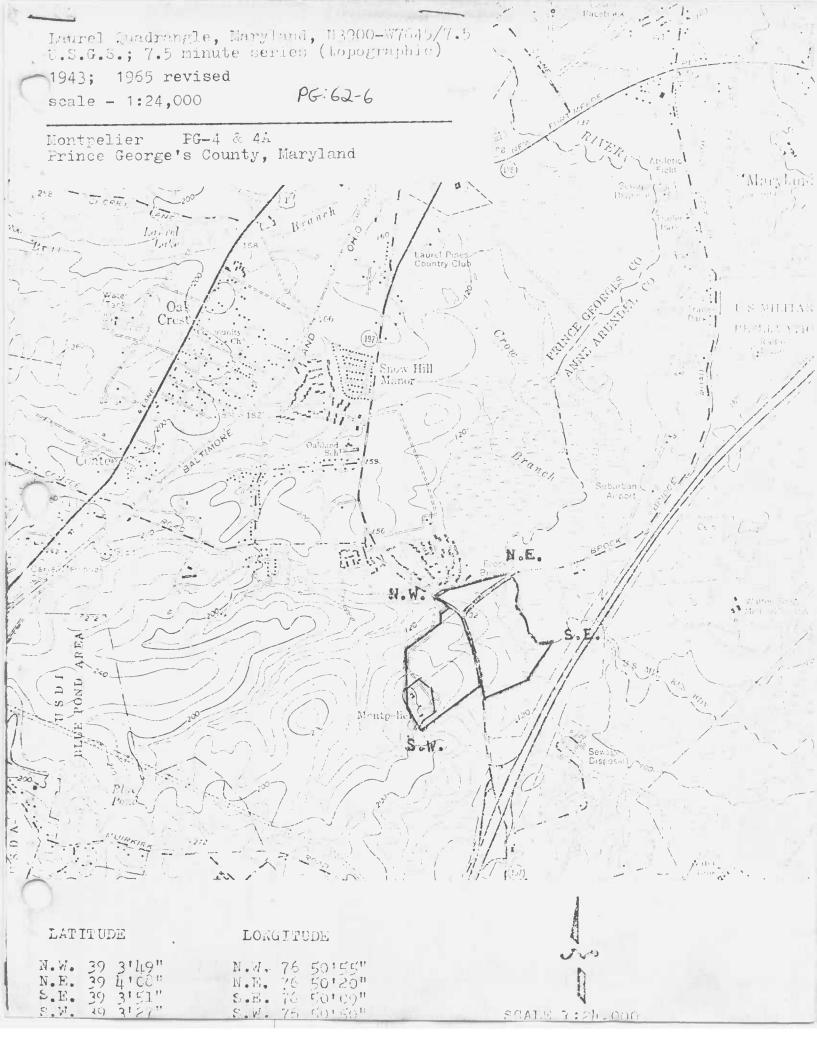
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PG:62-6

Recorders: John S. Hewins, Government Relations Coordinat The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planni Commission, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Sprin Naryland 20907; October 22, 1969 Nichael Bourne, Maryland Historical Trust, P.O Box 1704, Annapolis, Md. William Morgan, Maryland Historical Trust, P.O Box 1704, Annapolis, Md., June 3, 1969 [See continuation sheet] Latitude and Longitude Coordinates Defining a rectangle Locating the property CORNER LATITUDE Longitude Degrees Minutes Seconds NW 39° 3 · 49 ° 76° 50° 55" NE 39° 4 · 08 ° 76° 50° 50° SW 39° 3 · 27 ° 76° 50° 50° SW 39° 3 · 27 ° 76° 50° 50° APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY CODE COUNTY:	ng S,
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NAME AND TITLE:	
Mrs. Preston Parish, Keeper of the Maryland Register	
Maryland Historical Trust	1070
STREET AND NUMBER:	1970
P. O. Box 1704	
Annapolis Maryland	CODE
CTATE LIAISON OFFICE CERTIFICATION	19
NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION	
As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is: National X State Local Local	
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for Maryland Keeper of The National Register	1-terda
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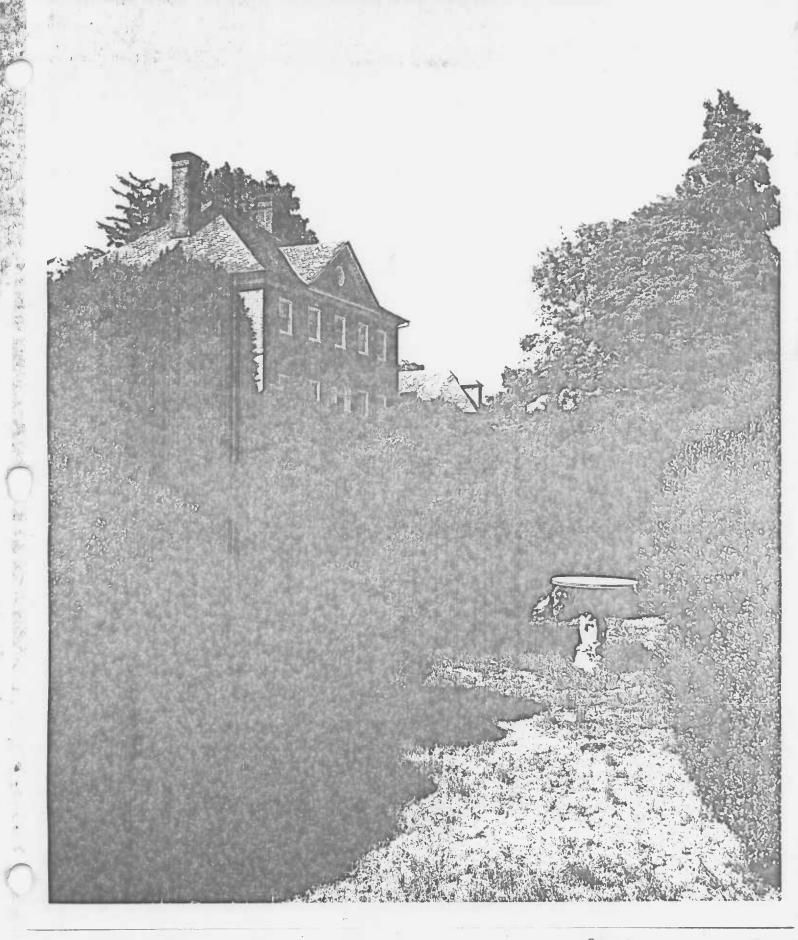
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Maryland NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. COUNTY 周 Prince George's PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM FOR NPS USE ONLY (Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph) ENTRY NUMBER S Z 1. NAME 1 0 Montpelier AND/ORHISTORIC: Snowden-long House, New Birmingham 2. LOCATION STREET AND NUMBER: U Maryland Route 197 \supset CITY OR TOWN: K Laurel STATE: COUNTY Maryland S Prince George's 19 033 PHOTO REFERENCE Z PHOTO CREDIT: Md.-Natl. Capital Pk. & Plan. Comm., Dept. of Public DATE OF PHOTO: unknown Relations NEGATIVE FILED AT: unknown ш ш 4. IDENTIFICATION DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. West Facade of Mansion

[temporary photo -- will be replaced as soon as possible]

No negative on file at MHT

1/16/70 - Md.-Natl. Capital Park
& Planning Commission
requested to send photos
and negatives

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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FOR NPS USE ONLY	

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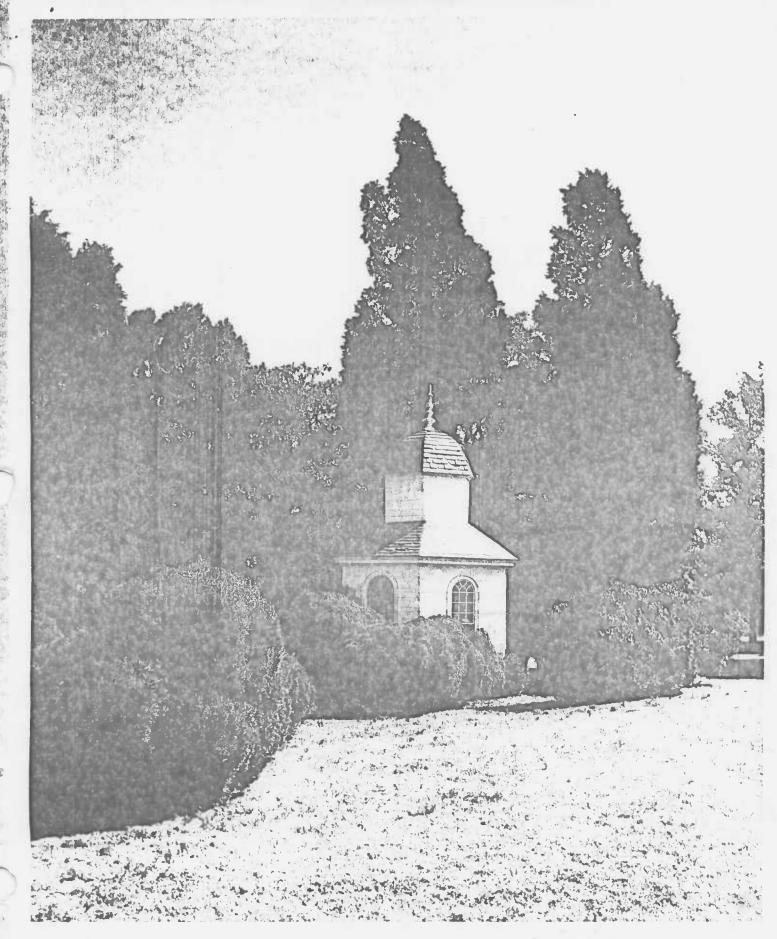
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Z									para Brapit)

	Mont Montpelier OR HISTORIC: Snowden-Long House		
2. LOCA	TION Snowden-Long House, New Birming	ham	
STRE	aryland Route 197		
	aurel		
	aryland code county:		Co
3. РНОТ	O REFERENCE .		
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4. IDEN	FIFICATION		
DESC	RIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		

[temporary photo -- will be replaced as soon as possible]

No negative on file at MHT 1/16/70 - Md.-Natl. Capital Park and Planning Commission requested to send photos and negatives

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Form 10-301 (Dec. 1968)

Z.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE
Maryland
COUNTY
Prince George's
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER DATE

	map)		-
1. NAME			
common: Montpelier			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Snowden-Lon, 2. LOCATION	a House N. D.		
2. LOCATION	g nouse, New Bli	mingham	
STREET AND NUMBER:	*		
Maryland Route 197			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Laurel			
STATE:			
Maryland	CODE COUNTY:		cc
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scale: 1:24,000 pate: 1943; 1965 revised REQUIREMENTS TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			

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MONTPELIER
PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY

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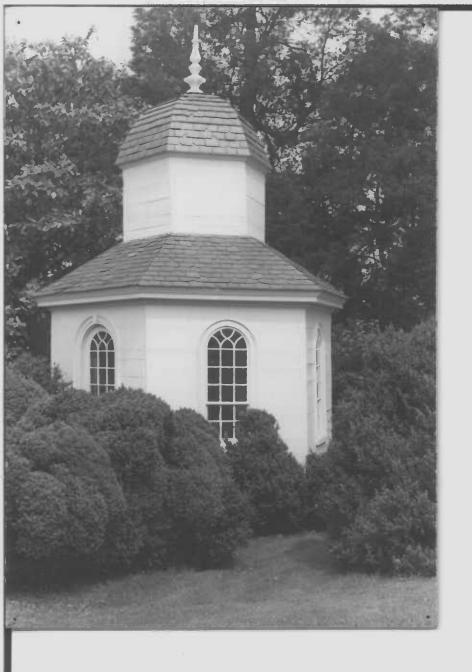


MONTPELIER, PRINCE GSORGES COUNTY P.G.-62-6

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